Learning About The . Net
Android Application Permissions

Below are some generic descriptions of common Android application permissions. Permissions can be changed or created by the developer, so it is important to click on new or unknown permissions to see a further detailed explanation of what each permission is requesting access to.

Remember: There are no strict rules about good or bad permission, but rather deciding whether to install an application based on the listed permissions is left solely to the user.

Permissions dealing with you:

Your Accounts

This permission allows the application to retrieve a list of known accounts on your phone. These would be accounts that you have made or have come installed on the phone. Examples might include Dropbox, Gmail or MSN accounts. These will allow the application to utilize these accounts to do things like share photos or documents.

Your Location

This permission will allow an application to view your location. Some apps request precise location using a GPS which will identify your location within 3 feet. Other apps will request an approximate location which will use a cellular tower or Wi-Fi connection to determine your approximate location.

Your Messages

This application will have the ability to read and write text messages (SMS) and/or picture (MMS) messages. This can end up costing money if you exceed your messaging plan.

Your Personal Information

This permission will allow an application to read through personal information stored on your phone. This might include reading through your call log which lists information about incoming and outgoing phone calls/data. It can also include reading through your contact list and seeing info about all the contacts you've stored on your phone like their address, phone, name, email etc. Web bookmarks and web history can also be included.

Your Phone Calls

This permission allows an application to access your phone's call information. This information might include phone numbers, the unique ID of your device, who you're calling and when the call took place.

Services that Cost You Money

> This permission allows an application to send text messages (SMS) which can potentially cost the user money. Some apps will request confirmation before sending a message when you're using the application, others will send the message without any confirmation from the user.

Permissions dealing with how the phone functions

Hardware Controls

> This permission controls physical actions about the phone, like vibration or recording audio files.

Network Communication

> This permission allows the application to gain access to the internet. It can create connections to other sites and exchange information with those sites.

Storage

> This permission details where the application can store its information. For example it might allow an application to write or read from USB or SD storage.

System Tools

> This permission might control actions taken by the system. For instance, it could prevent the phone from sleeping or prevent the screen from dimming. It could also start up an application automatically when the phone boots. This permission may control how an application installs itself, like whether it auto creates a desktop shortcut.